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Some secrecy restrictions on scholars to be relaxed, CIA official says in speech

CAMBRIDGE - The head of the Central Intelligence Agency's analytic wing, in a rare public speech last night, announced that the CIA would relax some secrecy restrictions it has in the past imposed on scholars who consult for it.

In a move designed to make the agency's "intensified effort to reach out to the academic community" more palatable to scholars, Robert M. Gates said the CIA would henceforth permit written disclosure of CIA funding for research projects unless the scholar requests that the funding be concealed or if the CIA determines that disclosure would harm US relations with a foreign country.

Speaking before an audience of 100 at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Gates, the deputy director for intelligence, said the agency would lift its requirements for prepublication review of research results except where classified information has been used by the scholar.

Gates also said participants in conference sponsored by the CIA,

must be told ahead of time about the agency connections.

The new policy was reached "as a result of the controversy here at Harvard," Gates said.

He was referring to a Harvard professor, Nadav Safran, who last year failed to notify participants at a conference on Islamic fundamentalism that it was being funded by the CIA.

After hearing Gates speech, Joseph S. Nye, Jr., professor of government and acting director of Harvard's Center for International Affairs, said, "You've just heard a bureaucracy move."

Gates said the CIA has recently redoubled its efforts to avail itself "of the good counsel of the best scholars in our country," and heatedly rejected arguments that doing research for the agency compromised academic freedom.

Noting that scholars do a wide range of consulting for other agencies in government, and for private industry, Gates complained that for critics of CIA-academic ties to "single out the CIA" was a "double standard if not outright

hypocrisy."

Since 1982, he noted, the agency has sponsored 300 academic conferences in the United States and sent more than 1,500 CIA analysts to conferences sponsored by academia and the private sector.

He also characterized the agency as "an important and useful supporter of area studies as well as language studies in the United States."

"We are looking for people to challenge our views, to argue with us, to criticize our assessments constructively, to make us think ... In short, we don't want scholars to tell us what they think we want to hear. That would make our effort pointless."

Gates spoke as the debate over ties between CIA and Harvard intensified with the disclosure yesterday that another professor, Samuel P. Huntington, acknowledged doing research for the CIA without notifying university officials until one year after began the project.

- RICHARD HIGGINS